

**ADJOURNED COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF WATERTOWN
MAY 24, 2002
1:00 P.M.**

MAYOR JOSEPH M. BUTLER PRESIDING

PRESENT: COUNCILWOMAN ROXANNE M. BURNS
 COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH
 COUNCILMAN PAUL A. SIMMONS
 COUNCILMAN JEFFREY M. SMITH
 MAYOR BUTLER

ALSO PRESENT: CITY MANAGER JERRY C. HILLER
 ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER MARY M. CORRIVEAU
 CITY COMPTROLLER JAMES M. McCaULEY

Mayor Butler opened the adjourned meeting.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

James Brett, Scheley Drive, addressed the chair asking Council to reconsider the tax rate increase. He expressed his concerns about businesses leaving the community. He asked that Council make sure that they are doing the right thing and take their time in adopting a budget.

The following resolutions were presented:

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York has determined the Budget for 2002-03 for all operating funds for the City of Watertown in the amount of \$36,556,185 of which \$27,231,627 is the General Fund, and of this amount in the General Fund \$ 9,066,227 is to be raised by taxes on real estate and \$11,802 is to be collected in omitted City taxes,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Watertown that the tax on real estate in the amount of \$ 9,078,831 is hereby levied and the rate to produce \$9,078,029 of this levy is hereby established at \$ 14.754 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, and the remaining \$ 11,802 is to be collected in omitted taxes.

**SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN ROXANNE M. BURNS AND CARRIED
WITH ALL VOTING YEAS EXCEPT COUNCILMAN SIMMONS AND
COUNCILMAN SMITH VOTING NAY**

(Rules waived by motion of Councilman Clough, seconded by Councilwoman Burns and carried with all voting yeas except Councilman Simmons and Councilman Smith voting nay)

Prior to the vote on the foregoing resolution, Councilman Smith read from a prepared statement outlining the times that he had stated his concerns about the 2002-03 budget. He referred to a memo he had sent to Mr. Hiller and Council members outlining his concerns and listing some suggestions for dealing with the budget problems.

Councilman Smith expressed his opinion that this budget does not address the current or future financial dilemma and will only put the City into deeper fiscal despair. He stated that he doesn't feel it is fiscally sound to reduce overtime in the Police and Fire budgets based on the hope that overtime will be lower than the previous two fiscal years. He also stated that he doesn't think it is fiscally responsible to budget revenues based on a reasonably good chance that the City might be eligible to receive a grant. He commented that the budget would contribute to the exodus of people and business from the City of Watertown. He stated that he could not support the budget, which he feels is shortsighted and does not address the underlying fiscal problems of the City.

Mayor Butler responded to Councilman Smith's remarks and stated that Council was faced with a formidable task of reducing a possible 24% tax rate increase. He remarked that the loss of sales tax revenues and the increase in health insurance costs both helped to drive the budget up. He also explained that when Council was made aware of the fund balance being reduced to a minimum, a hiring freeze was implemented. This freeze, involving ten positions, will mean a long-term savings. He mentioned that he also regards the 12% tax rate increase as a long-term fiscal remedy. Mayor Butler commented that he regards this budget as a more prudent and cautious way to implement a long-term savings. He also remarked that the public safety study would allow the City to implement professional recommendations. Mayor Butler also mentioned that there is still an opportunity to save money through studying the fire union's recommendations. He stated that to eliminate assistant positions would be irresponsible. Commenting on the reorganization plan, he stated that while this is going to take time, it would be a long-term solution, which will be done through attrition and retirements. He also stated that several years before this Council was elected, the Councils used to use the fund balance to keep the tax rate at a zero increase, which was the wrong thing to do. Now, he feels that the Council is getting the City's fiscal house in order. He explained that his job, as Mayor, is to see what tax rate is acceptable to the individual Council members as well as what they are willing to see cut from the budget. He commended everyone for the taking the time to work on the budget and stated that he respected each member for their decisions.

Councilman Simmons commented that he has spoken with business owners who have questioned whether or not this is a long-range operation and also questioned taking the

funds from the overtime budgets. He listed some of the dollar amounts that the tax increase would mean to individual businesses and stated that they would like to know what they are getting differently for it. He commented that it is imperative that Council starts looking immediately at next year's budget.

Councilwoman Burns commented that the three members who will be voting in favor of the budget are not happy about the 12% increase. However, the proposal by Councilman Simmons to eliminate yard waste curbside pickup would not have been enough to balance the budget. It is also a valuable service to the residents of this community. She remarked that this budget maintains the current level of service. She also stated that cost savings would be enacted in the re-organization plan as well as in addressing the airport and the library as being regional facilities. She stated that we are moving in the right direction. By cutting overtime, it has drawn attention to the fact that it has been out of control for the past few years.

Councilman Clough agreed with Councilwoman Burns and stated that getting rid of assistants would only be a short-term "shoot from the hip" approach. He stated that Council members have no idea what affect it would have on various departments. He stated that the prudent thing is what is being done. He remarked that if Council had cut positions and then the study came back and said not to eliminate any positions, the Council would look foolish. He stated that while business owners don't get yard waste pick up, they do receive other services such as plowing and clearing of city sidewalks. Councilman Clough also remarked that if the City didn't have Police and Fire, the tax rate would be lower than in the Town of Watertown. He said that citizens want these services and it is something extra that they have to pay for. He stated that Council must take a team approach, as it is inappropriate for each member to point fingers at another.

Councilman Smith commented that his suggestions were not "shoot from the hip". He explained that he had questioned some department heads on what the ramifications would be of eliminating the assistants and in some cases the department heads stated that they preferred not to answer. He commented that as far as agreeing with the study, Council did not do so in regards to the K-9 unit, which the study felt, should be reduced to one. He stated that if Council should have no input in the process, perhaps consultants should run the City. He also commented that DPW would still have six less workers but the same number of supervisors and management positions. He stated that in the private sector when this happens, there are layoffs.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York has met and considered the Proposed Budget for the City of Watertown for Fiscal Year 2002-03 and it has conducted public hearings on the Proposed Budget and has determined that revenues and appropriations for the several funds in the Budget for 2002-03 will be as indicated in the Budget Detail of Changes of Revenues and Appropriations, which Detail is attached and made a part of this resolution,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York that it hereby adopts the Budget for the City Government for Fiscal Year 2002-03 in the total amount of \$ 36,556,185 of which in the General Fund \$18,153,598 to be raised by estimated revenues other than real property taxes, \$ 11,802 is estimated to be received from omitted taxes and \$ 9,066,227 is to be raised by real property tax levy. In adopting the Budget, the City Council hereby appropriates \$36,556,185 for all operating funds, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in adopting the Budget, the City Council hereby appropriates \$ 4,571,061 for all reserve funds, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in adopting the Budget, the City Council approves the Budget Detail of Changes in Revenues and Appropriations, which is attached and made a part of this resolution.

SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN ROXANNE M. BURNS AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING YEA EXCEPT COUNCILMAN SIMMONS AND COUNCILMAN SMITH VOTING NAY

(Rules waived by motion of Councilman Clough, seconded by Councilwoman Burns and carried with all voting yea except Councilman Simmons and Councilman Smith voting nay)

INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMAN PETER L. CLOUGH

WHEREAS the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York has met and considered the Proposed Budget for the City of Watertown for Fiscal Year 2002-03, including the Proposed Capital Program for the years 2002-03 through 2006-07 and has conducted public hearings on the Proposed Capital Program Budget, and has determined that the projects as listed in the Capital Program as amended by the attached detail report, which is made a part of this resolution, shall constitute the Capital Program,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Watertown, New York hereby adopts the Capital Program Budget for the years 2002-03 through 2006-07.

SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN ROXANNE M. BURNS AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING YEA EXCEPT COUNCILMAN SIMMONS AND COUNCILMAN SMITH VOTING NAY

(Rules waived by motion of Councilman Clough, seconded by Councilwoman Burns and carried with all voting yea except Councilman Simmons and Councilman Smith voting nay)

Mayor Butler thanked City staff and the Council members for their time on the budget and gave special thanks to Mrs. Corriveau for her work and time spent on the budget.

Councilman Smith thanked Mr. McCauley, Mrs. Dutton, Mr. Hiller and Mrs. Corriveau for the time they all put in on the budget and budget sessions.

Councilman Simmons commented that the budget is now passed and it is time for the Council to work together.

Strategic Planning Session

The next strategic planning session is scheduled for Monday, June 10th at 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

AT THE CALL OF THE CHAIR MEETING WAS DULY ADJOURNED AT 1:46 P.M. BY MOTION OF COUNCILMAN CLOUGH, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN SIMMONS AND CARRIED WITH ALL VOTING IN FAVOR THEREOF.

Donna M. Dutton, City Clerk